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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001343

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALIAN EFFORTS ONGOING ON MEPP STATEMENT FOR NEXT  
WEEK,S EU FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: ROME 01328

Classified By: DCM Elizabeth L. Dibble Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Office Director for Israel-Palestinian Affairs, Davide La Cecilia, told Poloff on December 4 that his delegation is still working hard to achieve a more "balanced version" of the Swedish-proposed EU declaration on the Peace Process, and that some progress has been made. The declaration now contains "several passages that are positive for our Israeli friends," including mention of upgrading relations with the EU, acknowledgement of the Israeli settlement moratorium, support for the idea that the moratorium can lead to a resumption of negotiations without other preconditions, and elimination of reference to "Palestine" (without "state of").

¶2. (C) With the COPS Security Committee meeting scheduled for today in Brussels, he said his delegation is now working on some red lines, such as the elimination of language referring to East Jerusalem as capital of a future state. Efforts to cut the reference to Jerusalem as the capital of two states, he said, face strong opposition, as this expression has now entered into standard EU language, having been used before, but only at the sub-ministerial level. Another red line for Italy includes reference to the EU,s readiness to recognize a future state of Palestine when appropriate or in due time, he said; Italy fears this language encourages a unilateral declaration of statehood, but the formula proposed appeared in the Berlin European Council Declaration in 1999, so getting it dropped may prove challenging.

¶3. (C) La Cecilia said Italy,s main objective is to sustain the efforts of the US administration and bring about an urgent resumption of dialogue. He noted that the GOI was working to get better results on the proposed declaration by the end of today, with at least "constructive ambiguity" that could satisfy all parties (jokingly adding that it was unclear at this point whether the parties were the Israelis and Palestinians, or the various factions of the EU).

¶4. (C) He added that the point regarding the future capital was the most difficult. Some argue that if East Jerusalem is mentioned in paragraph 1, amid specific language that references a state of Palestine composed of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, this suggests that the whole of East Jerusalem would be part of the future state, thus prejudging negotiations. If instead there is reference to Jerusalem as a future capital of both states, this could suggest a neighborhood of East Jerusalem, such as Abu Dis, as capital, consistent with prior negotiations.

THORNE